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(54) **PIVOTING BLADE RETAINER**

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83/699.21, 698.31, 698.71, 954;

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See application file for complete search history.

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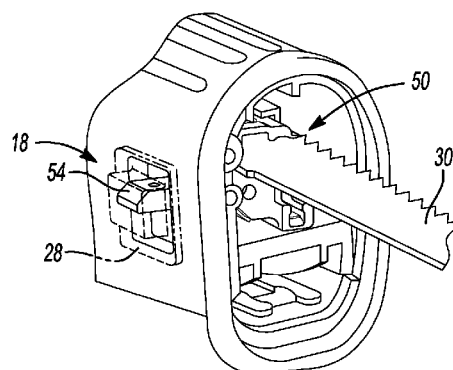
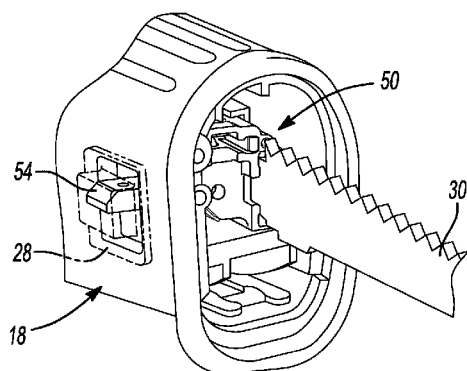
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(57)

ABSTRACT

A reciprocating saw having a clamping arrangement with a clamp support base, a first locking member and a release lever. The clamp support base defines a first blade slot that is configured to receive a saw blade therein. The first locking member is movable between a disengaged position, which does not inhibit withdrawal of the saw blade from the first blade slot, and an engaged position that inhibits withdrawal of the saw blade from the first blade slot. The release lever is pivotally coupled to the clamp support base and coordinates movement of the first locking member.

19 Claims, 6 Drawing Sheets



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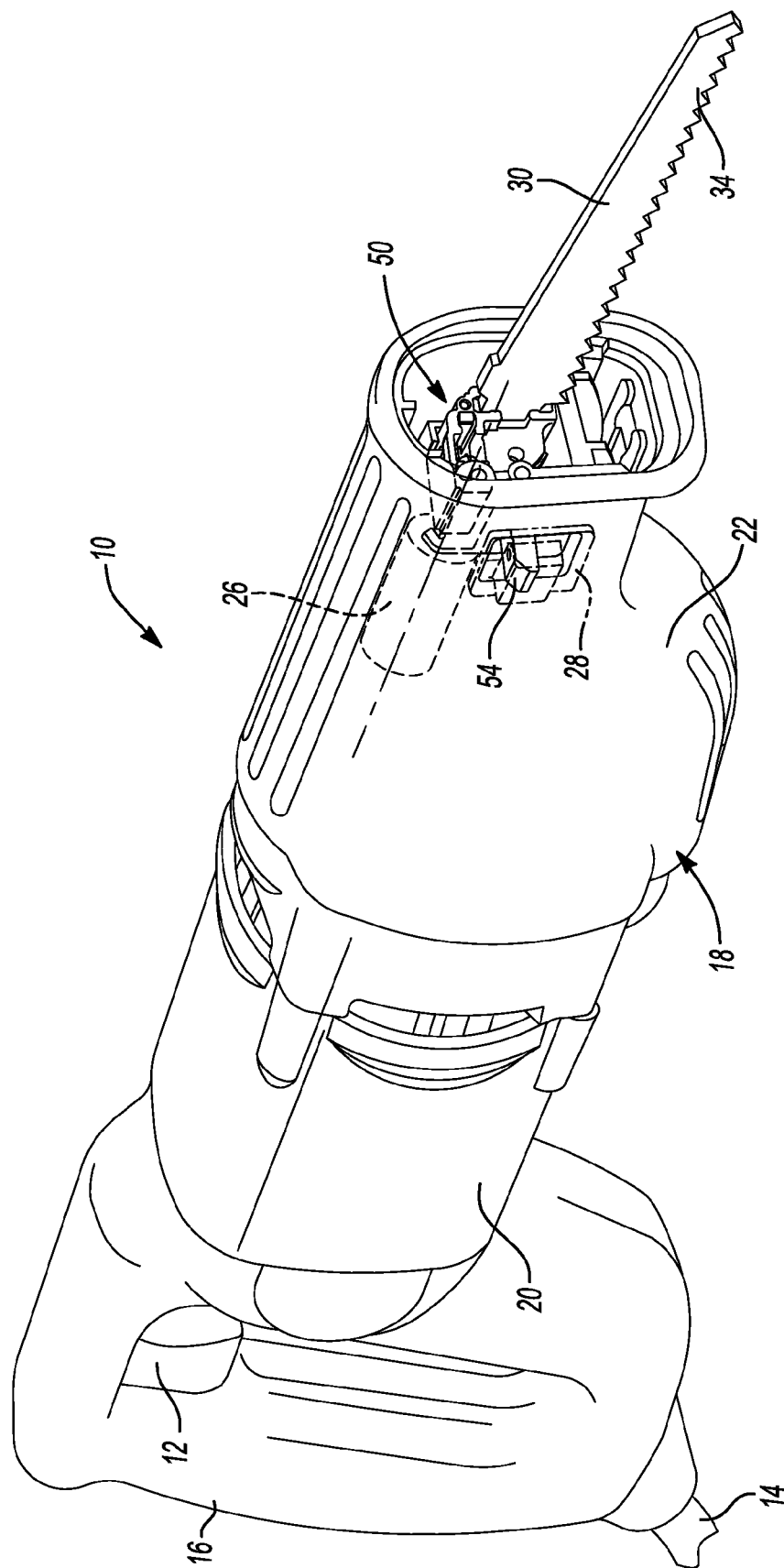


Fig-1

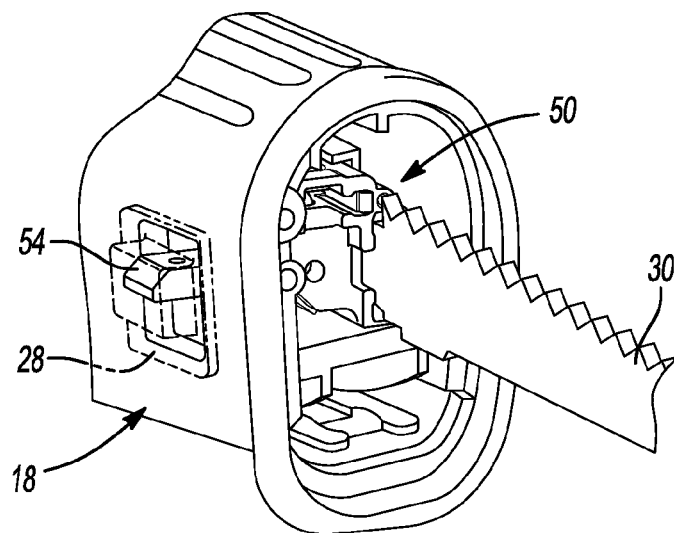


Fig-2

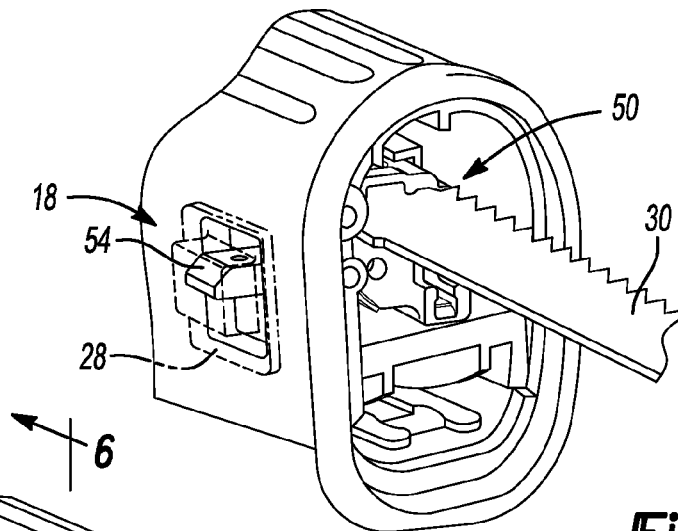


Fig-3

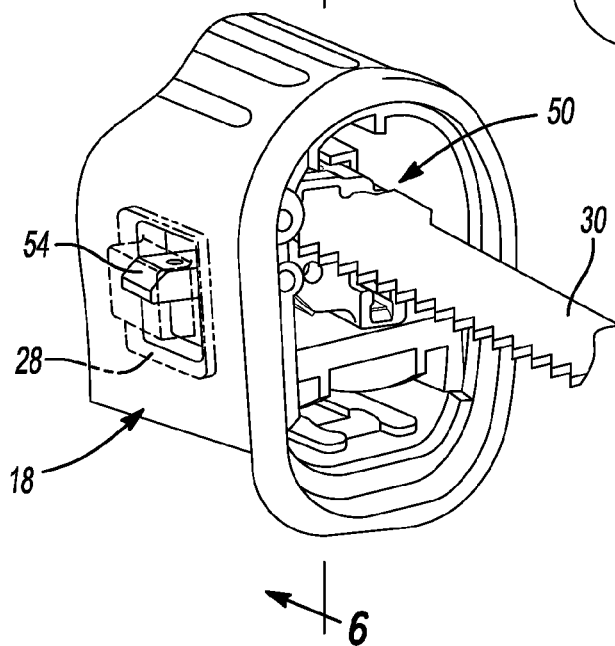


Fig-4

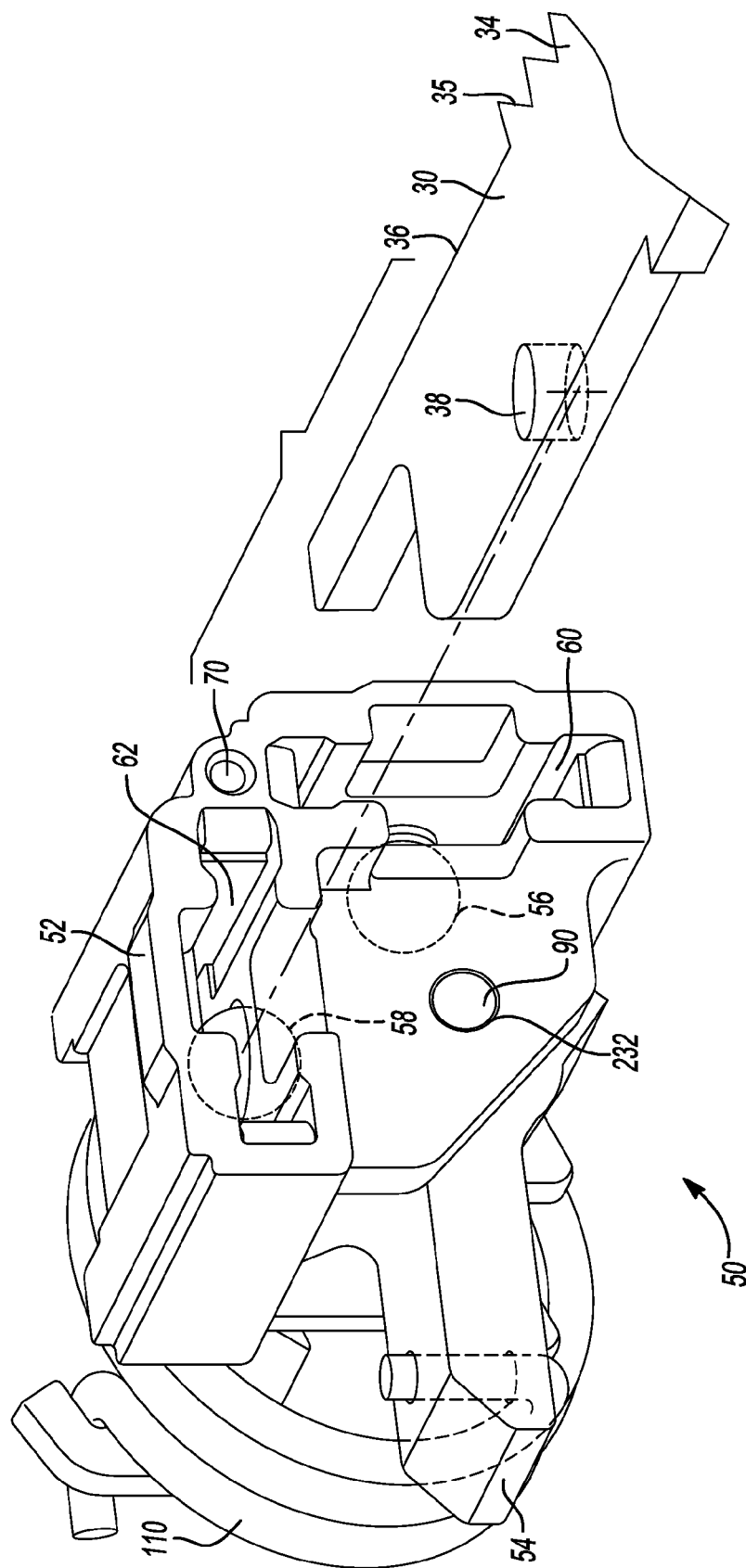


Fig-5

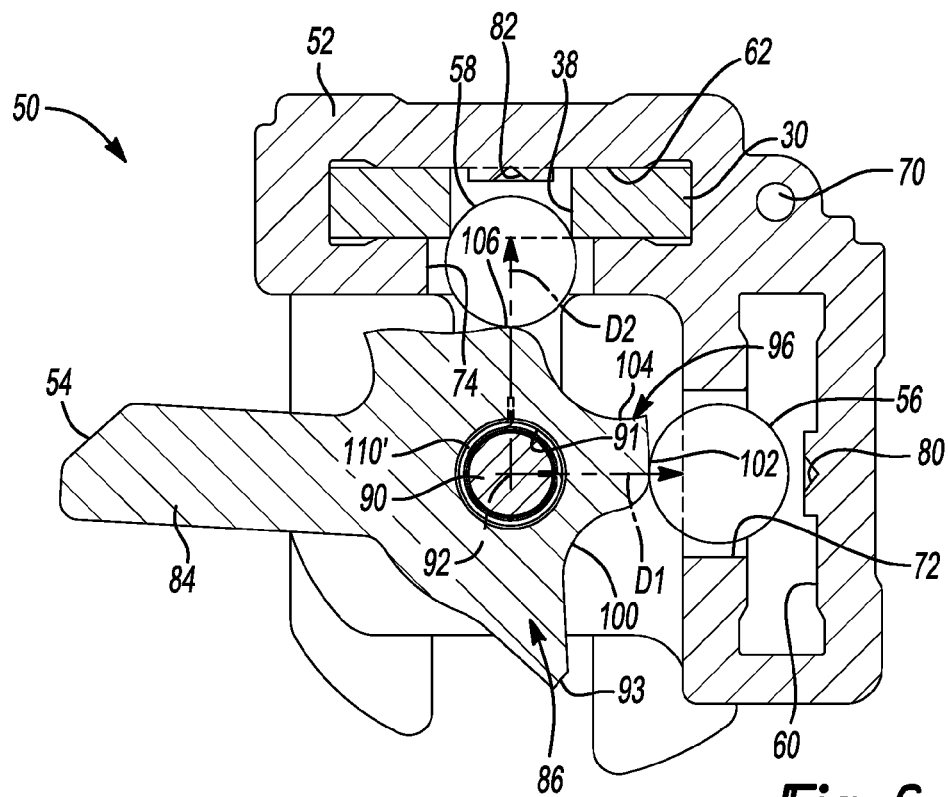


Fig-6

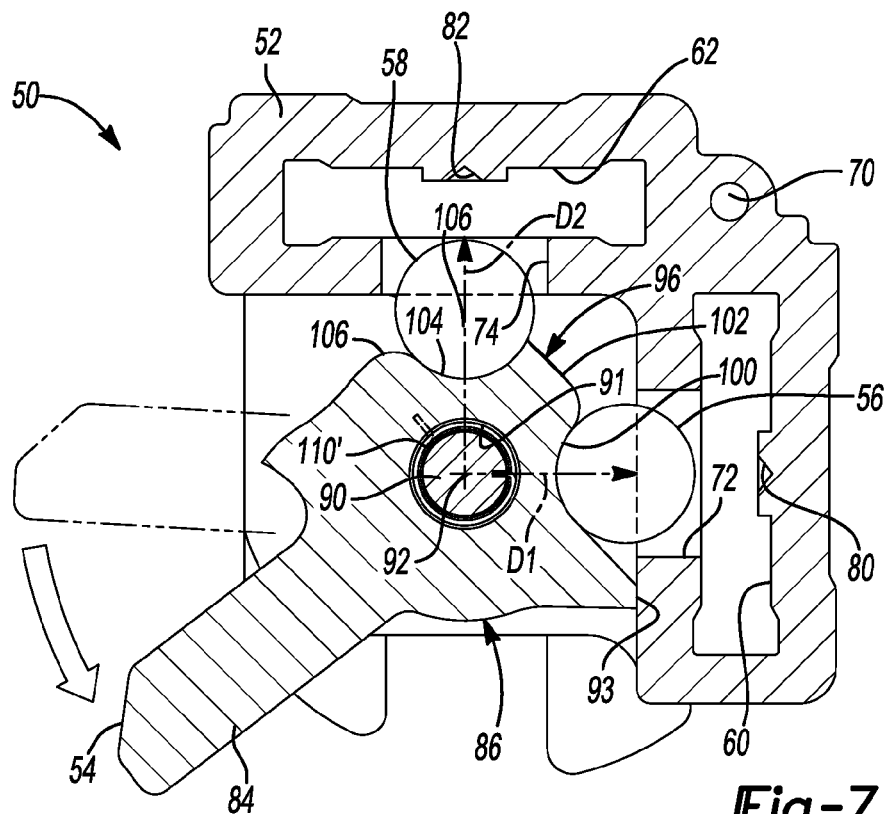


Fig-7

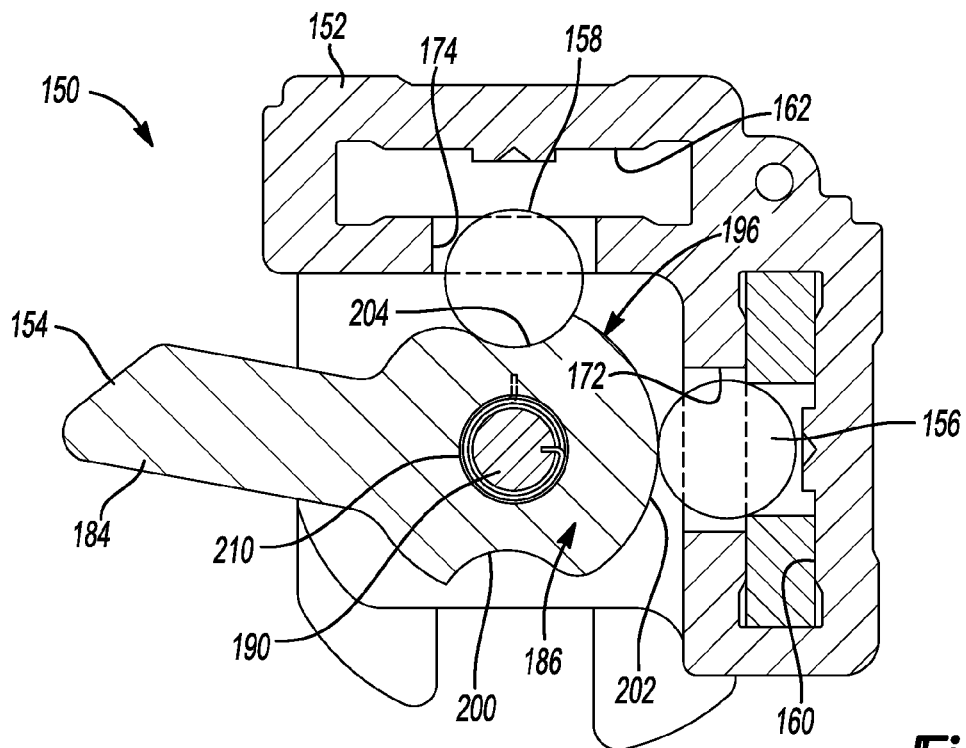


Fig-8

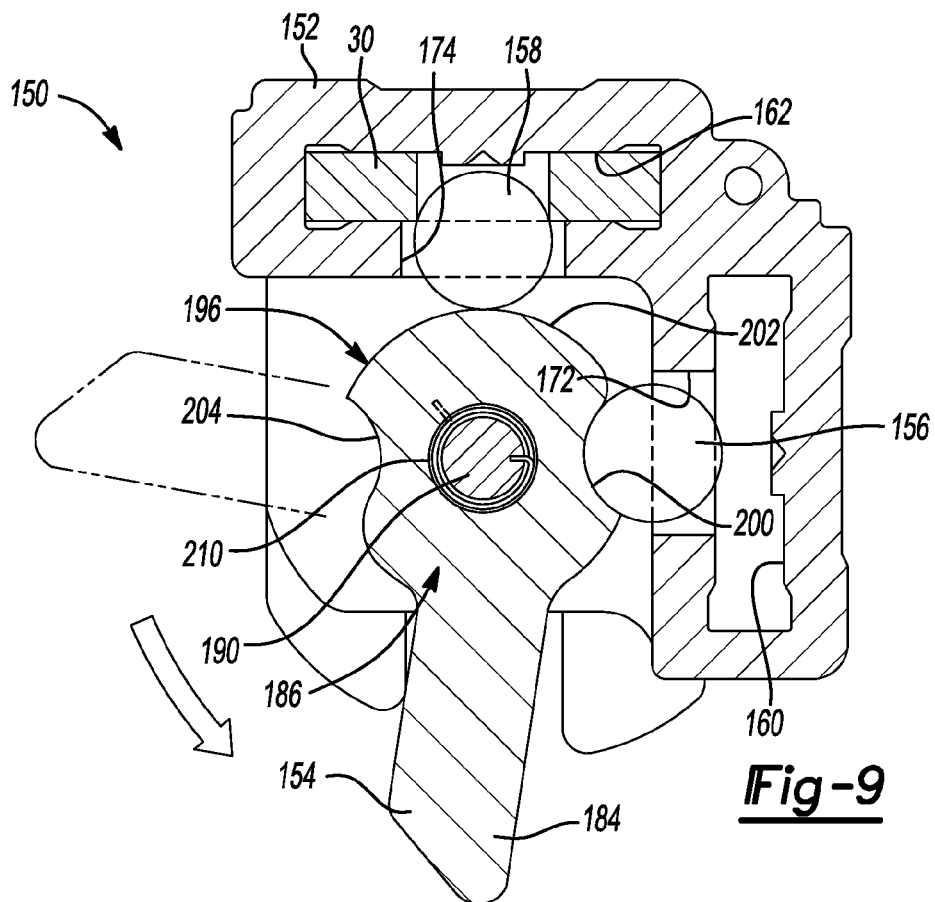


Fig-9

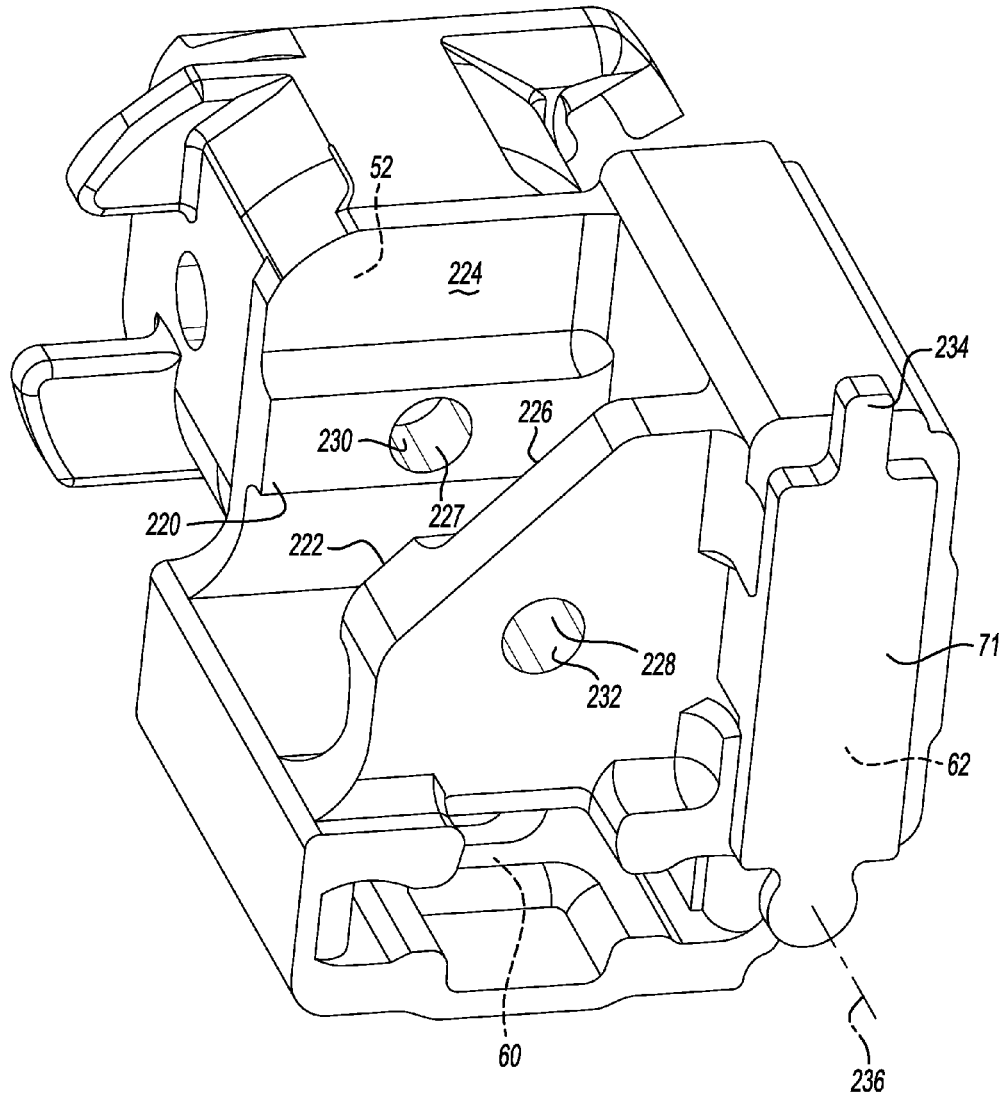


Fig-10

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PIVOTING BLADE RETAINER**CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

This is a continuation of U.S. application Ser. No. 14/048,340 filed Oct. 8, 2013, which is a division of U.S. application Ser. No. 12/731,934 filed Mar. 25, 2010. The disclosures of the above-referenced patent applications are incorporated by reference as if fully set forth in detail herein.

FIELD

The present disclosure relates in general to power tools. In particular, the present disclosure relates to a pivoting blade retainer for power tools having a saw blade mounted to a shaft for reciprocating cutting motion.

BACKGROUND

This section provides background information related to the present disclosure which is not necessarily prior art.

Power reciprocating saws including jigsaws and other reciprocating saws are generally referred to in the trade as “recip” saws. These saws incorporate reciprocating drive shafts. The drive shafts can operate to drive generally linear saw blades along a predetermined path so as to provide one of a rectilinear or orbital cutting action.

In a conventional manner, the saw blades used with such power tools can be attached to the reciprocating drive shafts through a blade holder having a slot for receiving the saw blade and a set screw which can be received in a hole in the blade. The blade can be clamped in place relative to the reciprocating drive shaft through tightening of the set screw. While this conventional manner of saw blade attachment has proven to be generally satisfactory and commercially successful, it is nonetheless desirable to provide an improved blade clamping mechanism.

SUMMARY

This section provides a general summary of the disclosure, and is not a comprehensive disclosure of its full scope or all of its features.

A saw blade clamping arrangement for a power tool is disclosed. The saw blade clamping arrangement can be operatively configured for use with a power tool that includes a housing and a drive shaft mounted for reciprocating motion relative to the housing and having a longitudinal drive axis. A saw blade can be releasably interconnected with the drive shaft for reciprocating motion along a longitudinal axis. The saw blade clamping arrangement can include a clamp support base that is operatively coupled for movement with the drive shaft and has a first and a second, saw blade slots. First and second locking members can be operatively associated with the clamp support base and be movable between a locked position that selectively locks the blade in one of the corresponding first and second slots, and an unlocked position that releases the blade.

A release lever can have a user engagement portion, a first cam surface and a second cam surface. The release lever can be mounted relative to the clamp support base for rotational movement about a pivot axis. The release member can be movable between a first position that corresponds to the locked position and a second position that corresponds to the unlocked position. Rotation of the release lever from the second position to the first position can cause the first cam

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surface to urge the first locking member at least partially into the first slot and the second cam surface to concurrently urge the second locking member at least partially into the second slot.

According to additional features, the release lever can be unitary. A pivot pin can be coupled to the support base that defines a pivot axis that the release member rotates about. The pivot pin can be coupled to the support base at a location that can be equidistant and/or in line with the first and second slots. A biasing member can be operably associated with the clamp support base that urges the release lever into the first position.

According to other features, the first and second cam members can directly contact the first and second locking members in the locked position. The first and second locking members can be spherically shaped. The release lever can include first and second concave surfaces that align with and nestingly receive the first and second locking members in the unlocked position. The clamp support base can define a first and a second cavity that accommodate the first and second locking members, respectively. The clamp support base can define a first and a second groove that oppose the respective first and second cam surfaces of the release lever. The release lever can be configured to rotate through substantially about forty-five degrees of motion around the pivot axis between the first position and the second position.

According to additional features, the release lever can be configured to alternatively lock either the first or the second locking member in the locked position.

In a further form, the present teachings provide a reciprocating saw that includes a housing, a drive shaft coupled to the housing for reciprocating motion along an axis and a clamping arrangement having a clamp support base, first and second locking members, a pivot pin, and a release lever. The clamp support base is coupled to the drive shaft for movement therewith and defines a first blade slot, a first cavity, a second blade slot and a second cavity. The first blade slot extends parallel to the axis and is configured to receive a saw blade therein. The first cavity is adjacent to the first blade slot. The second blade slot extends parallel to the axis and is configured to receive the saw blade therein. The second cavity is adjacent to the second blade slot. The first locking member is received in the first cavity and movable between a disengaged position, which does not inhibit withdrawal of the saw blade from the first blade slot, and an engaged position that inhibits withdrawal of the saw blade from the first blade slot. The second locking member is received in the second cavity and movable between a disengaged position, which does not inhibit withdrawal of the saw blade from the second blade slot, and an engaged position that inhibits withdrawal of the saw blade from the second blade slot. The pivot pin is coupled to the clamp support base. The release lever has a first unlocking surface, a second unlocking surface and a cam surface disposed between the first and second locking surfaces. The release lever is pivotally mounted on the pivot pin and movable between a first closed position and a second closed position. When the release lever is in the first closed position, the first unlocking surface is disposed in-line with the first cavity, permitting movement of the first locking member from its engaged position to its disengaged position, and the cam surface is in-line with the second cavity preventing movement of the second locking member from its engaged position to its disengaged position. When the release lever is in the second closed position, the cam surface is in-line with the first cavity preventing movement of the first locking member from its engaged position to its disengaged position, and the second unlocking surface is disposed in-line with the second cavity,

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permitting movement of the second locking member from its engaged position to its disengaged position.

In another form, the present teachings provide a reciprocating saw that includes a housing, a drive shaft coupled to the housing for reciprocating motion along an axis and a clamping mechanism with a clamp support base, first and second locking members, a pivot pin, and a release lever. The clamp support base is coupled to the drive shaft for movement therewith and defines a first blade slot, a first cavity, a second blade slot and a second cavity. The first blade slot extend parallel to the axis and is configured to receive a saw blade therein. The first cavity is adjacent to the first blade slot. The second blade slot extends parallel to the axis and is configured to receive the saw blade therein. The second cavity is adjacent to the second blade slot. The first locking member is received in the first cavity and is movable between a disengaged position, which does not inhibit withdrawal of the saw blade from the first blade slot, and an engaged position that inhibits withdrawal of the saw blade from the first blade slot. The second locking member is received in the second cavity and is movable between a disengaged position, which does not inhibit withdrawal of the saw blade from the second blade slot, and an engaged position that inhibits withdrawal of the saw blade from the second blade slot. The pivot pin is coupled to the clamp support base. The release lever is pivotally mounted on the pivot pin and movable between a first position and a second position. Rotation of the release lever about the pivot pin between the first and second positions coordinates movement of the first and second locking elements between their disengaged and engaged positions.

Further areas of applicability will become apparent from the description provided herein. The description and specific examples in this summary are intended for purposes of illustration only and are not intended to limit the scope of the present disclosure.

DRAWINGS

The drawings described herein are for illustrative purposes only of selected embodiments and not all possible implementations, and are not intended to limit the scope of the present disclosure.

FIG. 1 is a front perspective view of an exemplary reciprocating saw that incorporates a clamping arrangement constructed in accordance to the present teachings, the saw blade clamping arrangement shown operatively associated with a saw blade in a first orientation;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view illustrating a portion of the exemplary reciprocating saw of FIG. 1, the saw blade clamping arrangement shown operatively associated with the saw blade in a second orientation;

FIG. 3 is a perspective view illustrating a portion of the reciprocating saw of FIG. 1, the saw blade clamping arrangement shown operatively associated with the saw blade in a third orientation;

FIG. 4 is a perspective view illustrating a portion of the reciprocating saw of FIG. 1, the saw blade clamping arrangement shown operatively associated with the saw blade in a fourth orientation;

FIG. 5 is an exploded perspective view of the saw blade clamping arrangement of FIG. 1 and shown with an exemplary saw blade;

FIG. 6 is a cross-sectional view of the saw blade clamping arrangement of FIG. 5 and taken along lines 6-6, the saw blade clamping arrangement shown with a release lever in the closed position;

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FIG. 7 is a cross-sectional view of the saw blade clamping arrangement of FIG. 6 and shown with the release lever in the open position;

FIG. 8 is a cross-sectional view of a saw blade clamping arrangement according to additional features and shown with a release lever in a first closed position;

FIG. 9 is a cross-sectional view of the saw blade clamping arrangement of FIG. 8 and shown with the release lever in a second closed position; and

FIG. 10 is a front perspective view of the clamp support base.

Corresponding reference numerals indicate corresponding parts throughout the several views of the drawings.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Example embodiments will now be described more fully with reference to the accompanying drawings.

The present disclosure provides an improved saw blade clamping arrangement for a power tool. While shown throughout the drawings in one embodiment for a saw blade clamping arrangement specifically adapted for a reciprocating saw, those skilled in the art will appreciate that the disclosure is not so limited in scope. In this regard, the various teachings of the present disclosure will be understood to be readily adaptable for use with any power tool incorporating one or more reciprocating cutting members (e.g., reciprocating saws, jigsaws, various surgical saws and culinary knives, etc.).

With reference now generally to the drawings in which identical or equivalent elements have been denoted with like reference numerals, and specifically to FIGS. 1-4 thereof, an exemplary power tool is shown and generally identified at reference numeral 10. The exemplary power tool 10 embodies the teachings of the present disclosure and is illustrated in FIG. 1 as a power reciprocating saw. In a conventional manner, the power reciprocating saw 10 can be powered by a motor (not shown) that can be actuated by a trigger switch 12. The delivery of electrical energy to the motor through a power cord (partially shown at reference numeral 14) can be controlled by the trigger switch 12. In other examples, the power tool 10 can be alternatively powered by a battery.

In the exemplary embodiment illustrated, the power tool 10 can include a handle portion 16 that carries the trigger switch 12. The power tool 10 can also include a housing 18 that has a centrally located motor housing portion 20 and a forwardly located gear case housing portion 22. The power tool 10 can further include a drive shaft 26 that partially extends within a drive shaft channel (not specifically shown) and operatively connected with a drive mechanism (not specifically shown) housed within the gear case housing portion 22. The inner connection between the drive mechanism and the drive shaft 26 can be in any manner well known in the art. The drive shaft 26 can be mounted for reciprocating motion generally along a longitudinal axis defined by the power tool 10. A button or cover 28 can be arranged on the gear case housing portion 22 that communicates with a release lever as will become appreciated from the following discussion.

The drive shaft 26 can be adapted to cooperate with a cutting member, such as a saw blade 30 (see also FIG. 5) for driving the saw blade 30 back and forth in a cutting motion along a rectilinear path. In this regard, the reciprocating drive shaft 26 can be formed to include a transversely extending aperture for receiving a drive pin (not specifically shown). Additional description of the drive shaft 26 and its operation relative to other components of the power tool 10 may be

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found in commonly owned U.S. Pat. No. 7,325,315, which is expressly incorporated herein by reference.

With brief reference now to FIG. 5, the exemplary saw blade 30 can conventionally include a forwardly located cutting portion 34 that has teeth 35 and is integrally formed with a rearwardly located mounting portion 36. In a manner well known in the art, an aperture or blade hole 38 can be formed in the mounting portion 36 of the saw blade 30. As will become appreciated from the following discussion, the aperture 38 is operable to selectively receive locking members to secure the position of the saw blade 30 relative to the power tool 10.

Returning now to FIGS. 1-4, the power tool 10 of the present disclosure further includes a clamping arrangement 50 for releasably maintaining the saw blade 30 in operative connection with the reciprocating drive shaft 26. The saw blade clamping arrangement 50 according to the present disclosure can be operable to accommodate the saw blade 30 in various orientations. As will become appreciated below, this aspect of the present disclosure can provide a user of the power tool 10 with improved flexibility to avoid obstacles that may be encountered during cutting operations.

Prior to addressing the specific construction and operation of the clamping arrangement 50, a brief description of the various saw blade orientations will be explained. FIG. 1 illustrates a first cutting position in which the blade 30 can be disposed in a generally vertical plane and the teeth 35 of the blade 30 can be oriented downward. The blade orientation as illustrated in FIG. 1 is typical of known reciprocating saws. As illustrated in FIG. 2, a second cutting position is shown in which the blade 30 can again be oriented in a generally vertical plane. In the second cutting position, the teeth 35 of the blade 30 can be oriented upward. Turning now to FIG. 3, a third cutting position in which the blade 30 can be oriented in a generally horizontal plane is shown. In the third position, the cutting position is perpendicular as compared to the first and second cutting positions. As illustrated in FIG. 4, a fourth cutting position is shown in which the blade 30 can again be oriented in a generally horizontal plane. In the fourth cutting position, the teeth 35 of the blade 30 can be oriented in a generally opposite direction to the third cutting position shown in FIG. 3.

With additional reference now to FIG. 5, the clamping arrangement 50 can generally include a clamp support base 52, a pivoting blade retainer or release lever 54, a first locking member 56 and a second locking member 58. According to the exemplary embodiment illustrated, the first and second locking members 56 and 58 can be in the form of spherical balls. Other configurations are contemplated such as, but not limited to cylindrical, oval, oblong and pin-shaped. The first and second locking members 56 and 58 can be formed of rigid material, including metal, such as stainless steel for example. The clamp support base 52 can define a first or vertical slot 60 for receiving the blade 30 in either the first cutting position (as shown in FIG. 1) or the second cutting position (as shown in FIG. 2). The clamp support base 52 can further include a second or horizontal slot 62. The second slot 62 can receive the saw blade 30 in the third cutting position (FIG. 3) or the fourth cutting position (FIG. 4). Notably, the second slot 62 can be spaced relative to the first slot 60. In this manner, the saw blade 30 can be off-center relative to the drive shaft 26 and positioned proximate to a sidewall of the tool housing 18. Such positioning of the saw blade 30 closer to the sidewall of the tool housing 18 can facilitate a flush cutting of a workpiece with the saw blade 30. Furthermore, the first slot 60 and the second slot 62 can be arranged in a non-intersecting

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manner on the clamp support base 52. Other configurations such as intersecting are contemplated.

Briefly, with continued reference to FIG. 5 and additional reference to FIGS. 6 and 7, the release lever 54 of the saw blade clamping arrangement 50 can be operable to rotate between a first or closed position (FIG. 6) where the first and second locking members 56 and 58 are urged into the first and second slots 60 and 62, respectively, for engagement with a saw blade 30. For illustrative purposes, the saw blade 30 is shown secured relative to the second cavity 62 however it is appreciated that the saw blade can similarly be positioned in the first cavity 60. The release lever 54 can be selectively rotated to an unlocked or open position where the first and second locking members 56 and 58 are permitted to retract away from the first and second slots 60 and 62 in a direction toward the release lever 54, such that the blade 30 can be selectively removed from the first or second slot 60 and 62.

The clamp support base 52 can include a mounting bore 70 that selectively receives a fastener or other mounting hardware for coupling a dust cover 71 (FIG. 10). The clamp support base 52 can further include a first locking ball cavity 72 and a second locking ball cavity 74. The first and second locking ball cavities 72 and 74 can be arranged for at least partially accommodating the first and second locking members 56 and 58, respectively. A first groove 80 can be formed on the clamp support base 52 adjacent to the first slot 60. The first groove 80 can oppose the first locking member 56 when release lever 54 is in the closed position (FIG. 6). A second groove 82 can be formed in the clamp support base 52 that opposes the second locking member 58 when the release lever 54 is in the locked position (FIG. 6).

The release lever 54 can generally include a user interaction portion 84 and a locking portion 86. The release lever 54 can be fixedly mounted around a pin 90 that is rotatably coupled to the clamp support base 52. The release lever 54 can define a passage 91 that receives the pin 90. In general, the release lever 54 can rotate with the pin 90 around an axis 92 defined by the pin 90 between the closed position (FIG. 6) and the open position (FIG. 7). In other examples, the release lever 54 can rotate around the pin 90 that is fixed relative to the clamp support base 52. In the example shown, the release lever 54 can rotate about forty-five degrees around the pin 90 between the closed and open positions. Other configurations are contemplated. According to one example, the release lever 54 can be a unitary piece formed of rigid material, such as metal including stainless steel for example. A positive stop 93 can be provided on the release lever 54 that engages a surface of the clamp support base 52 (FIG. 7) to preclude over-rotation in the counterclockwise direction as viewed in FIG. 7. A similar positive stop (not specifically shown) can be provided to preclude over-rotation in the clockwise direction.

The locking portion 86 of the release lever 54 will now be described in greater detail. The locking portion 86 can have an engaging surface 96 that collectively includes a first concave surface 100, a first cam surface 102, a second concave surface 104 and a second cam surface 106. In one example, the first and second concave surfaces 100 and 104 can substantially match the outer profile of the first and second locking members 56 and 58, respectively. Notably, a smooth arcuate transition can be provided along the engaging surface 96 from the first and second concave surfaces 100 and 104 to the first and second cam surfaces 102 and 106, respectively. The smooth arcuate transitions can facilitate a smooth and uniform engagement of the release lever 54 with the first and second locking members 56 and 58 during rotation of the release lever 54 between the closed and open positions.

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As illustrated in FIG. 6, with the release lever **54** in the closed position the first cam surface **102** of the locking portion **86** is substantially aligned for engagement with the first locking member **56** and the second cam surface **106** is substantially aligned for engagement with the second locking member **58**. In this regard, the respective first and second cam surfaces **102** and **106** can operatively urge the first and second locking members **56** and **58** at least partially into the respective first and second slots **60** and **62** in the closed position. With the first and second locking members **56** and **58** urged at least partially into the respective first and second slots **60** and **62**, the first and second locking members **56** and **58** can engage the blade **30**, such as at the blade hole **38**, to lock the blade **30** to the clamp support base **52** at the first or second slot **60**, **62**. In one example, a biasing member **110** can be arranged for urging the release lever **54** into the closed position illustrated in FIG. 5. A biasing member **110'** (FIGS. 6 and 7) can additionally or alternatively be arranged around the pin **90** for urging the release lever **54** into the closed position.

With specific reference now to FIGS. 6 and 7, rotation of the release lever **54** from the locked position (FIG. 6) into the unlocked position (FIG. 7) will be described. Rotation of the release lever **54** in the counterclockwise direction as viewed in FIG. 7 can align the first and second concave surfaces **100** and **104** with the respective first and second locking members **56** and **58** and allow the respective first and second locking members **56** and **58** to at least partially withdraw from the first and second slots **60** and **62**. Concurrently, the first and second locking members **56** and **58** can be permitted to nestingly locate against the first and second concave surfaces **100** and **104** of the locking portion **86** of the release lever **54**.

As can be appreciated, with the first and second locking members **56** and **58** retracted away from the first and second slots **60** and **62**, the saw blade **30** can be removed from the first or second slot **60**, **62**. It will also be appreciated that manual withdrawal of the saw blade **30** can further encourage the first and second locking members **56** and **58** to move toward the first and second concave surfaces **100** and **104** by a ramping action of the first and second locking members over the saw blade **30** at the blade hole **38**. According to the exemplary embodiment, a distance **D1** measured between the pivot axis **92** and the first slot **60** can be equidistant and/or in line with a second distance **D2** measured between the pivot axis **92** and the second slot **62**. Such a relationship can facilitate uniform force transmission onto the first and second locking members **56** and **58** during rotation of the release lever **54** to the closed position.

Rotation of the release lever **54** from the open position (FIG. 7) back to the closed position (FIG. 6) will be briefly described. As the release lever **54** rotates in a clockwise direction as viewed from FIG. 7, the first locking member **56** transitions from engagement with the first concave surface **100** into engagement with the first cam surface **102**. As identified above, a transition from the first concave surface **100** to the first cam surface **102** along the engaging surface **96** can be a smooth arcuate surface that encourages a smooth ramping movement along the outer surface of the first locking member **56**. Similarly, the second locking member **58** transitions along the engaging surface **96** from engagement with the second concave surface **104** to the second cam surface **106**. Again, the transition from the second concave surface **104** to the second cam surface **106** on the locking portion **86** of the release lever **54** can include a generally smooth and arcuate surface that promotes a smooth ramping engagement with the second locking member **58**. Rotation back to the closed position is further encouraged by the biasing force of the biasing member **110** (and/or **110'**).

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The blade clamping arrangement **50** according to the present teachings can be particularly robust over other blade clamps. More particularly, the blade clamp arrangement **50** can require only a rotational motion of a release lever that cams retaining balls into contact with a blade. Secondary components, such as sliders, etc. and/or additional motions, such as linear translations etc. are not necessary. In this regard, the blade clamping arrangement **50** can be less prone to binding up such as a result of debris build up, contamination or rust for example.

Turning now to FIGS. 8 and 9, a clamping arrangement **150** constructed in accordance to additional features of the present teachings will be shown. Unless otherwise described herein, the clamping arrangement **150** can be constructed similar to the clamping arrangement **50** described above and shown in FIGS. 6 and 7. In this regard, like features have been identified with similar reference numerals increased by **100**. The clamping arrangement **150** can generally include a clamp support base **152**, a pivoting blade retainer or release lever **154**, a first locking member **156** and a second locking member **158**. According to the exemplary embodiment illustrated, the first and second locking members **156** and **158** can be in the form of spherical balls however other shapes such as described above with respect to the first and second locking members **56** and **58** are contemplated.

The clamp support base **152** can define a first or vertical slot **160** receiving the blade **30** in either the first cutting position (as shown in FIG. 1) or the second cutting position (as shown in FIG. 2). The clamp support base **152** can further include a second or horizontal slot **162**. The second slot **162** can receive the saw blade **30** in the third cutting position (FIG. 3) or the fourth cutting position (FIG. 4). As will become appreciated from the following discussion, the release lever **154** is movable between a first closed position as shown in FIG. 8 that clamps a saw blade **30** within the vertical cut slot **160** and a second closed position as illustrated in FIG. 9 that clamps the saw blade **30** in the horizontal cut slot **162**.

With specific reference now to FIG. 8, the release lever **154** of the saw blade clamping arrangement **150** can be operable to rotate between the first closed position where the first locking member **156** is urged into the first slot **160** for engagement with a saw blade **30**. While the release lever **154** is urging the first locking member **156** into locking engagement with the saw blade **30** in the first slot **160**, the second locking member **158** is in a retracted position relative to the horizontal slot **162**. With specific reference to FIG. 9, with the release lever **154** rotated into the second closed position, the first locking member **156** is retracted from the vertical slot **160** and the second locking member **158** is urged into the second slot **162** for engagement with a saw blade **30**.

The clamp support base **152** can further include a first locking ball cavity **172** and a second locking ball cavity **174**. The first and second locking ball cavities **172** and **174** can be arranged for accommodating at least portions of the first and second locking members **156** and **158**, respectively. The release lever **154** can generally include a user interaction portion **184** and a locking portion **186**. The release lever **154** can be fixedly mounted around a pin **190** that is rotatably coupled to the clamp support base **152**. In general, the release lever **154** can rotate with the pin **190** between the first closed position (FIG. 8) and the second closed position (FIG. 9). In other configurations, the release lever **154** can rotate around the pin **190** that is fixed relative to the clamp support base **152**. In the example shown, the release lever **154** can rotate about ninety degrees with the pin **190** between the first and second closed positions. Other configurations are contemplated.

The locking portion **186** of the release lever **154** will now be described in greater detail. The locking portion **186** can have an engaging surface **196** that collectively includes a first concave surface **200**, a cam surface **202**, and a second concave surface **204**. In one example, the first and second concave surfaces **200** and **204** can substantially match the outer profile of the first and second locking members **156** and **158**, respectively. A smooth, arcuate transition can be provided along the engaging surface **196** from the first and second concave surfaces **200** and **204** to the cam surface **202**. The smooth arcuate transition can facilitate a smooth and uniform engagement of the release lever **154** with the first and second locking members **156** and **158** during rotation of the release lever **154** between the first and second closed positions.

With particular reference now to FIG. 8, with the release lever **154** in the first closed position, the cam surface **202** of the locking portion **186** is substantially aligned for engagement with the first locking member **156** and the second concave surface **204** is substantially aligned for engagement with the second locking member **158**. In this regard, the cam surface **202** can operatively urge the first locking member **156** at least partially into the first slot **160** in the first closed position. With the first locking member **156** urged at least partially into the first slot **160**, the first locking member **156** can engage the blade **30**, such as at the blade hole **38**, to lock the blade **30** to the clamp support base **152** at the first slot **160**.

With reference now FIG. 9, with the release lever **154** in the second closed position, the cam surface **202** of the locking portion **186** is substantially aligned for engagement with the second locking member **158** and the first concave surface **200** is substantially aligned for engagement with the first locking member **156**. In this regard, the cam surface **202** can operatively urge the second locking member **158** at least partially into the second slot **162** in the second closed position. With the second locking member **158** urged at least partially into the second slot **162**, the second locking member **158** can engage the blade **30**, such as at the blade hole **38**, to lock the blade **32** to the clamp support base **152** at the second slot **162**.

Turning now to FIG. 10, additional features of the clamp support base **52** will be described. While the foregoing additional features are described with respect to the clamp support base **52**, they may also be incorporated in the clamp support base **152**. For illustrative purposes, the release lever **54** and biasing member **110** have been removed. As shown, a pair of opposing rails **220** and **222** can extend from walls **224** and **226**, respectively on the clamp support base **52**. The walls **224** and **226** can have arcuate surfaces **227** and **228** that define apertures **230** and **232**, respectively that support the pin **90** (FIGS. 6 and 7). A width of the release lever **54** can be configured to slideably engage respective surfaces of the opposing rails **220** and **222**.

In one advantage, friction can be reduced on the release lever **54** as it may only slideably engage the reduced surface area of the rails **220** and **222** as opposed to the entire surface of the walls **224** and **226**. Furthermore, the rails **220** and **222** can encourage dust and debris to be scraped or otherwise removed from the outer surfaces of the release lever **54** during rotation of the release lever **54** with the pin **90**. In this regard, the rails **220** and **222** can minimize the surface area that can be contaminated by dust and debris. Moreover, the pin **90** can rotate around the arcuate surfaces **227** and **228** defining the apertures **230** and **232** (rather than the release lever **54** rotating around the pin **90**). As the collective surface area of the surfaces **227** and **228** is relatively smaller than a surface area defined by the passage **91** (FIG. 6) through the release lever **54**, a reduced friction can be realized during rotation of the release lever **54**. In addition, the friction areas (i.e., the sur-

faces of the opposing rails **220** and **222**) that slideably engage the release lever **54** and the arcuate surfaces **227** and **228** that slideably engage the pin **90** are near the center of rotation of the release lever **54** (i.e., axis **92**). In this regard, the moment arm created by the release lever **54** around the axis **92** can offer a user a mechanical advantage that can overcome the friction described above with minimal resistance during rotation of the release lever **54**.

The dust cover **71** is shown covering the second slot **62**. The dust cover **71** can include a protruding tab **234** for user engagement during rotation. The dust cover **71** can be rotated about a pivot axis **236** to cover an entrance to the first slot **60**.

The foregoing description of the embodiments has been provided for purposes of illustration and description. It is not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the disclosure. Individual elements or features of a particular embodiment are generally not limited to that particular embodiment, but, where applicable, are interchangeable and can be used in a selected embodiment, even if not specifically shown or described. The same may also be varied in many ways. Such variations are not to be regarded as a departure from the disclosure, and all such modifications are intended to be included within the scope of the disclosure.

What is claimed is:

1. Reciprocating saw comprising:

a housing;

a drive shaft coupled to the housing for reciprocating motion along an axis;

a clamping arrangement having a clamp support base, a first locking member, a pivot pin, and a release lever, the clamp support base being coupled to the drive shaft for movement therewith, the clamp support base defining a first blade slot and a first cavity, the first blade slot extending parallel to the axis and being adapted to receive a saw blade therein, the first cavity intersecting the first blade slot, the first locking member being received in the first cavity and movable between a disengaged position, which does not inhibit withdrawal of the saw blade from the first blade slot, and an engaged position that inhibits withdrawal of the saw blade from the first blade slot, the pivot pin being coupled to the clamp support base, the release lever having a first unlocking surface and a cam surface, the release lever being pivotally mounted on the pivot pin and movable between a first position and a second position, wherein when the release lever is in the first position, the first unlocking surface is disposed in-line with the first cavity, permitting movement of the first locking member from its engaged position to its disengaged position, and wherein when the release lever is in the second position, the cam surface is in-line with the first cavity preventing movement of the first locking member from its engaged position to its disengaged position.

2. The reciprocating saw of claim 1, wherein the first locking member comprises a spherical ball.

3. The reciprocating saw of claim 2, wherein the first unlocking surface is at least partially concave in shape.

4. The reciprocating saw of claim 1, wherein the release lever includes a lever arm.

5. The reciprocating saw of claim 4, wherein the clamp support base comprises a pair of support walls and a pair of opposing rails that extend from the support walls, the release lever being received between and slidable on the pair of opposing rails, the opposing rails being adapted to at least partially remove debris on the release lever during rotation of the release lever while providing a reduced surface area that

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engages the release lever as compared to a surface area of the support walls to reduce contact between the clamp support base and the release member.

6. The reciprocating saw of claim 1, further comprising a biasing member that is coupled to the release lever.

7. The reciprocating saw of claim 1, wherein the clamp support base comprises a first blade housing portion and a pair of support walls, the first blade slot being formed in the first blade housing portion, the support walls being coupled to the first blade housing portion and spaced apart from one another along the axis, the pivot pin being engaged to the support walls.

8. The reciprocating saw of claim 7, wherein each of the support walls has a first face, which is disposed adjacent to the release lever, and a second, opposite face, the first face having a reduced area portion, the release lever contacting at least a portion of the reduced area portion as it rotates between the first and second positions, wherein the reduced area portion has a surface area that is smaller than a surface area of the second, opposite face.

9. A saw blade clamping arrangement for a power tool having a housing, a drive shaft and a saw blade, the drive shaft being mounted for motion relative to the housing and having a longitudinal drive axis, the saw blade being adapted to be releasably interconnected with the drive shaft via the saw blade clamping arrangement, the saw blade clamping arrangement comprising:

a clamp support base having a first saw blade slot that is adapted to receive the saw blade;

a first locking member operatively associated with the clamp support base and movable between a locked position, which is adapted to lock the saw blade in the first saw blade slot, and an unlocked position that is configured to at least partly release the saw blade to permit the saw blade to be withdrawn from the first saw blade slot;

a pivot pin mounted to the clamp support base and supported by opposing walls of the clamp support base; and

a release lever having a user interaction portion and a first cam surface, the release lever being positioned intermediate the opposing walls of the clamp support base and rotatably coupled around a pivot axis that is defined by the pivot pin, wherein the release lever is movable between a first position, corresponding to locating the first locking member in its locked position, and a second position, which is associated with locating the first locking member in its unlocked position, wherein positioning of the release lever in the first position causes the first cam surface to urge the first locking member at least partially into the first saw blade slot.

10. The saw blade clamping arrangement of claim 9, further comprising a biasing member that biases the release lever toward the first position.

11. The saw blade clamping arrangement of claim 10, wherein the biasing member is coupled to the release lever at a location that is closer to a terminal edge of the release lever and farther from the pivot pin.

12. The saw blade clamping arrangement of claim 9, wherein the release lever includes a first concave surface that

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aligns with and nestingly receives the first locking member when the release lever is in the second position.

13. The saw blade clamping arrangement of claim 12, wherein the clamp support base defines a first cavity that accommodates the first locking member.

14. The saw blade clamping arrangement of claim 9, wherein the release lever rotates through substantially about forty-five degrees of motion around the pivot axis between the first position and the second position.

15. The saw blade clamping arrangement of claim 9, wherein the first locking member is at least partly spherically shaped.

16. A saw blade clamping arrangement for a power tool that has a housing, a drive shaft and a saw blade, the drive shaft being mounted for motion relative to the housing and having a longitudinal drive axis, the saw blade being adapted to be releasably interconnected with the drive shaft via the saw blade clamping arrangement for reciprocating motion along a longitudinal axis, the saw blade clamping arrangement comprising:

a clamp support base that is adapted to be coupled to the drive shaft for common movement, the clamp support base having a first saw blade slot;

a first locking member received in the clamp support base and movable between a locked position, which is adapted to lock the saw blade in the first saw blade slot, and an unlocked position that permits the saw blade to be input to and withdrawn from the first saw blade slot;

a release lever having a user interaction portion and a first cam surface, the release lever being coupled to the clamp support base for rotational movement about a pivot axis between a first position and a second position to thereby move the first locking member, wherein placement of the release lever in the first position places the first locking member in its locked position, and wherein placement of the release lever in the second position places the first locking member in its unlocked position; and

a pivot pin coupled to the clamp support base and defining the pivot axis that the release lever rotates about, wherein the pivot pin is supported by opposing walls of the clamp support base located on opposite sides of the release lever, wherein rotation of the release lever from the second position to the first position causes the first cam surface to urge the first locking member at least partially into the first saw blade slot.

17. The saw blade clamping arrangement of claim 16, further comprising a biasing member that biases the release lever toward the first position.

18. The saw blade clamping arrangement of claim 17, wherein the biasing member is coupled to the release lever at a location that is closer to a terminal edge of the release lever and farther from the pivot pin.

19. The saw blade clamping arrangement of claim 16, wherein the first locking member is at least partly spherically shaped.

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